

Today Congressman John Olver announced the release of \$490 million in Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) contingency funds to help low income citizens with their heating bills. Massachusetts' share is \$16,850,200.

"The release of these funds will soften the blow New England is feeling this winter. Heating one's home during harsh northeastern winters is not a luxury, nor is it a choice. We need to ensure that families can afford to keep the heat on."

The Fiscal Year 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act includes a total of \$5.1 billion for LIHEAP, with more than \$590 million dedicated to LIHEAP contingency funding. The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981 instructs LIHEAP contingency funding be used in the case of natural disasters, emergencies or times of economic hardship. These funds will supplement block grant funding already being spent in every state.

On January 8, 2010, Congressman Olver was one of 113 Members of the House to send a letter to President Obama asking him to release LIHEAP contingency funds as soon as possible to address the needs of families and seniors struggling in the current economic crisis.

LIHEAP helps eligible families pay the costs of heating and insulating their homes in the winter and cooling their homes in the summer. HHS is releasing such a large allocation of LIHEAP funds now in order to ensure that states have resources available to support their energy assistance programs as the weather turns colder and the nation faces high unemployment rates.

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